

## **Stradella**

[Romantic opera, in three acts; text by Deschamps and Pacini. First produced as a lyric drama at the Palais Royal Theatre, Paris, in 1837; rewritten and produced in its present form, at Hamburg, December 30, 1844.]

### PERSONAGES.

Alessandro Stradella, a famous singer. Bassi, a rich Venetian.  
Leonora, his ward. Barbarino, } Malvolio, } bandits.

[Pupils of Stradella, masqueraders, guards, and people of the Romagna.]

The scene is laid in Venice and Rome; time, the year 1769.

The story of the opera follows in the main the familiar historical, and probably apochryphal, narrative of the experiences of the Italian musician, Alessandro Stradella, varying from it only in the dénouement. Stradella wins the hand of Leonora, the fair ward of the wealthy Venetian merchant, Bassi, who is also in love with her. They fly to Rome and are married, but in the mean time are pursued by two bravos, Barbarino and Malvolio, who have been employed by Bassi to make way with Stradella. They track him to his house, and while the bridal party are absent, they enter in company with Bassi and conceal themselves. Not being able to accomplish their purpose on this occasion, they secure admission a second time, disguised as pilgrims, and are kindly received by Stradella. In the next scene, while Stradella, Leonora, and the two bravos are singing the praises of their native Italy, pilgrims on their way to the shrine of the Virgin are heard singing outside, and Leonora and Stradella go out to greet them. The bravos are so touched by Stradella's singing that they hesitate in their purpose. Bassi upbraids them, and finally, upon receiving an additional sum of money, they agree to execute his designs, and

conceal themselves. When Stradella returns and rehearses a hymn to the Virgin which he is to sing on the morrow, they are so affected that they emerge from their hiding-place, confess the object of their visit, and implore his forgiveness. Explanations follow, a reconciliation is effected, and the lovers are made happy. This dénouement differs from that of the historical version, in which both lovers are killed.

The principal numbers are Stradella's serenade, "Hark! Dearest, hark"; the following nocturne, "Through the Valleys"; the brilliant carnival chorus, "Joyous ringing, Pleasure singing," in the first act: the aria of Leonora in her chamber, "Be Witness to my Fond Heart's Dreaming," the rollicking drinking-song of the two bravos, "Quick, let us drink," and the bandit ballad, "Within Lofty Mountains," sung by Stradella, in the second act; and an exquisite terzetto, "Tell me, then, Friend Barbarino," sung by Bassi and the two bravos when they hesitate to perform their work; and Stradella's lovely hymn to the Virgin, "Virgin Maria, humbly adoring," in the third act.